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NASA and Pocomoke High School Teaming to Protect Wallops Island

The NASA Wallops Flight Facility is teaming with the Pocomoke High School Ecology Club, Pocomoke City, Md., to plant dune grass that will help protect the facilities and launch complexes on Wallops Island, Va.

NASA is interested in establishing a strong back dune ecological community behind the sea wall that protects NASA's rocket launch facilities and Navy facilities on the island. These dunes will aid in protecting the shoreline from severe erosion and flooding caused by coastal storms.

Weather permitting, on April 6, 2000, approximately 40 students will plant beach grass on two 100 to 150 foot long test dunes. Beach grass is essential in stabilizing coastal sand dunes and preventing shoreline erosion. These dunes are located at two locations on the Island behind an existing rock sea wall.

After the grass is planted, Wallops personnel will monitor precipitation, growth rates, natural regeneration, impact on erosion and use various horticultural techniques to manage the grasses.

The results from this project will help Wallops officials in determining the best methods to develop the back dune for protecting the vital resources on the island.

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